

Misadventures in Kalos

by lliilllII

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Summary: Ash slowly discovers just how much romance he is capable of through unfortunate events that keep happening.

1. Chapter 1: Show-off

[Ash]

_It was a bright day in Kanto. Ash and his friends had just arrived at the Pokemon Center and were now waiting for their pokemon to be checked up on. _

"Alright," Nurse Joy said "Your Pokemon are in top shape!"

"Sweet!" Ash replied, grinning. He knew what that meant. He was ready to train for his 7th gym badge. Ash turned to his friend Clemont.

"Hey Clemont, what'd you say to a Pokemon battle?" he asked

Clemont laughed. "Sure! I'd love to!" he said. Knowing Ash, this wasn't going to be easy. But throughout this journey, Clemont had learned a lot from Ash, like not giving up until the end.

"Great!" Ash said "Let's go!"

The group headed out onto the battlefield right outside the Pokemon center.

"One pokemon each?" Ash asked

"You got it!" Clemont replied

Ash smiled and turned to the yellow mouse Pokemon on his shoulder.

"Pikachu, you're up!" he said

"Pikachu eh?" Clemont asked "Alright then, I will use this Pokemon! Go Luxray!"

Clemont threw his pokeball forward with all his might. There was a brief flash of red light and the Shining Luxray appeared, standing on four majestic paws. Luxray looked as polished as ever, gleaming with light.

"Okay Luxray, use swift!" Clemont cried

Ash watched the doglike electric type raise its tail. With a fluent movement, golden stars flew from the tail of the Pokemon and flew towards Pikachu. Ash took a deep breath. This is what he had been training for. The thrill of it all, it was just so exciting.

"Go Ash!" Serena called from the side. She was standing next to Bonnie, with a smile on her face.

Ash didn't know what was going on, but he couldn't help but to stare. For some reason, he felt the strong urge to impress her. All thought of strategy left him, as he redirected his attention back to the battle.

"Alright Pikachu, counter with electro-ball!"

"Pika pika!" the mouse Pokemon replied

As the stars moved closer and closer, Pikachu raised his own tail.

"PIKA-CHU!"

The ball of electricity soared through the air and splashed against the stars from Luxray, causing a large explosion that temporarily blinded Ash. When the smoke cleared, both Pokemon were standing strong.

"Nice job Ash!" cried Bonnie

Ash smiled.

"Alright Pikachu," he said "Use Iron tail!"

Pikachu's tail glowed silver as he charged towards Luxray. This was going to be perfect. Ash had no doubt that Serena would be impressed by this. Ash looked at Luxray and tried to think about what it was going to do next. But Clemont wasn't giving any commands yet. As Pikachu drew nearer and nearer, Ash grew more confident. Soon, Luxray wasn't even going to be able to dodge, and Pikachu would land a direct hit. As Pikachu started to swing his tail, Ash saw Clemont's glasses light up.

"Huh?" Ash wondered

A large smile formed on Clemont's face. This is what he had been waiting for.

"Luxray, dodge and counter with thunder fang!"

The dog-like Pokemon ducked underneath the swinging tail and slammed its front teeth into the back of Pikachu, releasing all the energy built up. The mouse Pokemon cried in pain and fell over.

"PIKACHU!" Ash cried, watching in shock

"I saw that coming," Clemont said "You underestimated the speed of my Luxray."

Ash said nothing. His head was beginning to pound with anger and frustration. _How on earth could he have miscalculated his attack? _ "No," he thought to himself. "I can't let it get to me! I must stay focused!"_

"Pikachu," Ash cried "Are you still able to battle?"

"Pika pika!" Pikachu replied, pushing itself back onto its feet.
"Alright Pikachu," Ash said "Use thunderbolt!"

"PIKA-CHU!"

The energy from Pikachu's cheeks were released into one massive stream of electricity that sailed through the air towards Luxray.

"Not gonna work Ash!" Clemont cried "Use wild charge!"

Ash watched with horror as Luxray began to accelerate, surrounded by a field of energy. Luxray ran through Pikachu's electricity as if it was thin air and collided with the mouse Pokemon, resulting in a massive explosion. When the smoke cleared, Ash saw his Pikachu lying unconscious, as Luxray stood over its small body.

"Pikachu is unable to battle, so Luxray is the winner!" Bonnie cried
"Which means, Clemont wins!"

"Alright!" Clemont shouted "Well done Luxray!"

Clemont aimed his Pokeball at Luxray and shot a beam of red light towards it. He felt the energy entering the Pokeball, and with a satisfied click, Luxray was back inside its ball.

"Well done!" Clemont said again, as he tucked the pokeball back into his pocket. Meanwhile, Ash was fuming in anger. "How did I lose like that? I was pathetic!" he thought_. Ash scooped up PIkachu in his arms and said, "Sorry Pikachu, it was my fault."

The mouse Pokemon stared at him and replied, "Pika pika."

"Thanks buddy." Ash said. In reality, Ash had no idea what Pikachu was saying, but the countless years he spent with Pikachu gave him a pretty good impression that PIkachu was encouraging him. He felt horrible, staring at the injuries Pikachu had sustained, due to his mistakes. But what was more depressing than losing, was the fact that Serena had seen his fiasco.

"Pikachu, let's get you some help." Ash said, carrying Pikachu back towards the Pokemon center.

"Ash are you alright?" Clemont called, running up to him

"What?" Ash replied, though he knew he wasn't alright. "I'm fine!"

"You seemed a bit distracted during your battle." Clemont said "It was like you were somewhere else."

"What do you mean?" Ash said suddenly, tensing up

"Well normally you wouldn't have been so careless." Clemont said "You're usually prepared for anything." It was remarkable, how strong their friendship was, as Clemont was able to sense if something was wrong with Ash.

"I guess I'm not feeling my best." Ash said. He wasn't sure what had gotten into him, but he wasn't ready to tell Clemont about how he felt when Serena was cheering him on, despite how Clemont was always there for Ash in the past. "Sorry I wasn't able to give you the best battle, but I think I need some time by myself." he said

Clemont nodded. "Alright, take it easy Ash!" he said as he went to join Serena and Bonnie.

Ash walked alone, back to the Pokemon Center, thinking of excuses he would say to cover up his abysmal performance.

5 hours laterâ€!

Ash was inside his room, with Pikachu sitting beside him. He was still thinking about his battle. But something else was bothering him. The way he felt when Serena was smiling at him. This was the first time Ash had ever felt this sensation. Was it because he was spending too much time with her? Ash shook his head and laughed.

"I'm not gonna let a stupid girl like Serena stop me from winning the Kalos league!" he shouted out loud "I'm gonna go out there and train to be the best!"

Right after Ash said that, he felt horrible. How could he have said that about his friend, the one who had taken care of him when he was ill, the one who had encouraged him when he was down, and the one that he laughed with, partied with, danced with?

A loud crash rang through the room, the sound of shattering glass, followed by the all too familiar sobbing sound of someone in pain.

"Pika?" Pikachu asked

"I don't know buddy." Ash replied "But I'll check it out."

Ash opened his room door to find a basket of Pokepuffs scattered in the hallway, right outside, along with a shattered glass of orange juice. A single black boot had been left behind as well. At first, Ash didn't know what was going on, but then, the horrible truth dawned on him, as he stared at the black boot. It was Serena's. "She must have heard me say that!" he thought "What have I done?" Ash

felt his face turning red, as tears began to well up.

"I'm a horrible person!" he shouted angrily "I don't deserve a friend like her!"

"Pika pika." the mouse pokemon replied disapprovingly as it raised its nose. "Pi-pika-chu."

2. Chapter 2: Fight and Flight

[Serena]

"_How could Ash say that to me?! After all I've done for him! I have been nothing but supportive!"_

These thoughts followed Serena, as hot tears rolled down her cheeks. She tripped and fell as she was running, and her left boot came off, but she didn't care. She got up and began running again, leaving her boot behind. The pain in her heart was too great for her. She ran down the stairs, bumping into people everywhere, but Serena was oblivious to them. Clemont and Bonnie were still at the ground floor of the Inn, when they saw a sobbing Serena run past them.

"Serena!" Bonnie called "What's wrong?"

Serena didn't look back. It was like she was detached from the world, unable to see or hear anything. But reality caught up to her, as her left foot smashed against something on the ground, causing her to trip and fall. She buried her head in her arms and began sobbing. People around her were staring. The previously noisy room was now dead silent.

"Aipom Arm, go!" Clemont cried. The hand from his backpack extended and grabbed Serena's arm, pulling her up.

"Hey, stop staring!" Bonnie shouted at the onlookers. Muttering and laughing, they returned to their business. Clemont and Bonnie ran over to Serena.

"What's wrong?" Clemont asked kindly

"It's A-Ash!" Serena cried "I overheard him calling me stupid!"

"Well that's not very nice." Bonnie said angrily, puffing her lips. "I'm gonna have a word with him."

"Bonnie no." Clemont said "Ash will come to his senses and apologize. I bet he's coming down to apologize right now."

Sure enough, as Clemont finished his sentence, Serena saw Ash running into the lobby, looking tired and abashed. He was holding a boot and a basket of Pokepuffs.

"Serena—" he began, but Serena didn't want to hear any of it.

"Leave me alone!" she cried "You obviously don't care about me."

"That's not true!" Ash shouted indignantly "How could you say such a thing?"

"You called me stupid, after everything we've been through! It's almost like it meant nothing to you!"

"I-I wasâ€| It slipped out! I was frustrated!"

"ENOUGH!" Bonnie cried "Both of you, get over yourselves!"

Serena was furious. Every part of her wanted to hurt Ash as much as possible.

"Braixen, come on out!" she cried. "Use flamethrower on that ungrateful jerk!"

"Braix?" the fox-like Pokemon asked "Braixen! Braixen!"

Braixen refused and continued to look at Serena with a strange look. Serena was furious.

"I SAID, USE FLAMETHROWER!"

Braixen looked at her with a confused expression.

"Braixen?" the fox asked "Braixen Braixen!"

Serena slapped herself in the forehead and returned Braixen to her Pokeball. More tears started to come.

"I'VE HAD ENOUGH!" she cried, snatching her boot from Ash's hands. With a single fluid motion, she slapped him across the face with all her strength, causing Ash to stagger backwards. She angrily stuffed her foot back into her boot and began to run out the door, tears flowing down her cheeks. Once she was outside the inn, Serena slowed her pace to a walk, and began thinking to herself.

"_Ashâ€|he was always so nice to me. I thought I liked himâ€|and after everything we've been throughâ€|"__

She was never able to finish the thought. An electric net came from nowhere and surrounded her, knocking her hat off.

"Aww, the little twerp is alone!" a familiar cat's voice shouted "Let's get her and her Pokemon!"

"Hahahaha! Prepare for trouble!"

"And make it double!"

"To protect the world from devastation!"

"To unite all people within our nation!"

Serena didn't hear the rest. In fact, she didn't need to. It was all too familiar. She felt herself being lifted into the air, as her pink hat floated in the wind and landed on the ground.

_Back in the Pokemon Centerâ€| _

[Ash]

"I need to go after her!" Ash cried "I don't want her to get hurt!"

Ash was struggling against Clemont's arm as he tried to run towards the front door.

"Give her some time," Clemont said "She needs a bit of time to herself."

Ash kicked and screamed some more, before running out of energy.

"Science is so amazing," he said in a dazed voice as he collapsed on the ground. Clemont and Bonnie ran over to him, helping him get to his feet.

"Serena won't be long." Bonnie assured him "But you did really hurt her feelings."

"Yeah I know." Ash said "I was a jerk. I let my frustration get to me."

"But why Serena?" Bonnie asked "Why were you frustrated at her?"

Ash shook his head. He wasn't sure if he could explain what he was feeling.

"Did she do something?" Bonnie asked "Or do you find her annoying? I think she gets pretty annoying sometimes when she talks about how pretty her Braixen's fur is!"

"Bonnie!" Clemont said indignantly "That's not nice!"

Ash said nothing, as he gazed out the window, wondering where Serena was. It was starting to get dark. If Serena didn't come back soon, it would be too dark to see.

"Ash?" Clemont asked "Don't be worried."

"I have to be. What if she doesn't come back?"

"She will, now get some rest. When you wake up, Serena will be here."

Bonnie nodded. "I'll wait here for her!" she said "Ash go to sleep, you look really tired."

Ash couldn't take it anymore. Here were two of his closest friends that cared for him, but he couldn't even tell them how he was feeling.

"There's something I want to tell you guys," Ash said, taking a deep breath. "It's about Serena."

Bonnie and Clemont moved in closer, each with the same curious expression.

"Alright," Ash said "During today's battle, I felt like I needed to

impress her and to get her attention. Something about her makes me feel that way."

With that being said, a huge burden flew off his chest. He felt as if he had lost half his weight.

"Aww," Bonnie said "Does that mean you like her?"

"Like her?" Ash asked

It had never crossed his mind before. He had never really given the topic a thought. After watching Brock all these years, it seemed that love was something of a completely different world, something that Ash would never know. But did he like Serena? For the rest of the night, Ash couldn't think about anyone but Serena, no matter how hard he tried. He rolled around in his bed, constantly thinking. He began to see Serena's face on almost every painting or poster in the room. He saw Serena's face on his own body when he looked into the bathroom mirror. Twice he woke Pikachu up with his incessant movements and received an excruciating punishment of electricity. Ash even saw Serena's face on where Pikachu's face should've been.

"Pikachu," Ash whispered "What do I do?"

"Pika Pika." the mouse Pokemon replied

"Thanks buddy." Ash said, not knowing what Pikachu actually meant. These were one of the times when Ash would've appreciated Team Rocket's Meowth. He yawned and rolled over, dreaming of Serena's face on Pikachu's body.

3. Chapter 3: The Hoenn Ponyta

[Ash]

Ash woke up shaking with sweat. It was a normal day, but he felt as if something was missing. His eyes turned to the mouse pokemon curled up against his lap.

"Hey buddy," Ash said "How's it going?"

Pikachu let out a yawn and turned to Ash. "Pika Pika" he replied.

"That's good." Ash said. The two of them got up. Ash started changing out of his pajamas. He was about to get ready to brush his teeth when a loud knocking interrupted him.

"Ash," Clemont was saying "Something's not right."

Ash frowned. He felt uneasy too this morning, but he couldn't really remember. He stared at his own reflection in the mirror, which looked normal, until he remembered.

"_Serena is gone...I made her leaveâ€!" _he thought, as his good mood instantly went downhill. He didn't care about brushing his teeth anymore. He didn't even have his shoes on, but that didn't matter. Ash immediately opened the door and asked, "Clemont, where's Serena? Did she leave?"

Clemont shook his head.

"That's the problem," he said "She didn't come back last night."

Ash felt his heart sinking. His vision became fuzzy. He staggered and felt himself collapse against Clemont.

"Ash!" Clemont said in surprise

Ash didn't care that Clemont was about to fall over. He didn't even notice his bare feet scraping against a pebble in the hallway outside of his room.

"Ash!" Clemont shouted again. This time, Clemont's strength gave out, and both of them fell on the ground. Ash planted his face in the ground and didn't want to look up. He felt his eyes welling up with tears.

"Ash, come on," Clemont said "Crying won't bring her back. We better look for her!"

These words rang in Ash's head. He felt his body tense up as he pushed himself to his feet.

"You're right." he said "Let's go!"

Clemont smiled. "That's the spirit." he said "But first you need to put on your socks and your shoes. You also forgot Pikachu."

Ash scrambled up in his room, getting ready faster than ever. Within a minute, he was prepared. He ran down the stairs as fast as he could, until he saw Bonnie and Clemont.

"Hey guys," Ash panted "Let's go!" Pikachu nodded in approval and said, "Pika pika!"

The three of them walked out of the inn and looked around. They saw no sign of Serena. After about 30 minutes of searching, Ash began to lose hope. _"Maybe I made her go away forever," he thought "Maybe I'll never see her again. Maybe she got lostâ€¦" _Hot tears of frustration were about to come. Those thoughts were quickly replaced with anger. _"One insult and she just leaves? Maybe I'm better without her." _Then, all of a sudden, he felt a warm hand on his shoulder.

"Ash, don't worry." someone said. It was a girl's voice.

"S-serena?" Ash stammered, turning around. When he saw the shorter, brown-haired girl, his heart sank.

"No silly," she replied "I'm Shauna, remember? Pokemon camp?"

Ash planted his hand against his head and sighed.

"I heard what happened." Shauna said "You probably hurt her pretty bad."

"I know." Ash replied, looking down. "But why would she run away like that and not come back?"

Shauna shook her head and said, "I have no idea. But I know someone who does!"

At that moment, a loud rumbling filled the air. Ash saw Clemont and Bonnie come over, accompanied by Tierno and Tyler, Ash's other friends.

"The future is now, thanks to science!" Clemont said "Clemontic Gear, on! I thought we would encounter a situation precisely like this one! I call this the missing person locator!"

"That name is lame!" Bonnie said

Clemont ignored her and continued. "This machine can trace down someone based on their scent. And I have Serena's shirt right here."

Clemont pulled a red shirt out of his bag and held it towards the machine. It was a dog-like robot, with glowing red eyes. The robot barked twice and began running towards the woods.

"After it!" Ash cried as he sprinted as fast as he could. The others followed as fast as they can. After about five minutes, the robot stopped.

"Already?" Ash asked "Is she here?"

Ash turned around. Clemont and the others were nowhere to be seen. He was alone, with Clemont's robot. Then, Ash saw five figures moving towards him, one of them being dragged by another.

"Bonnie, I can't!" Clemont was saying

"Oh come on!" Bonnie replied angrily

Clemont panted and wheezed, and collapsed in front of Ash's feet.

"I did it!" he gasped

Ash shook his head. This was all too familiar, but that wasn't the problem. The robo-dog had stopped in front of a tree and was sniffing at something. It was a red hat with a single black stripe on it, glowing bright in a dense green forest.

"Serena?" Ash called "Where are you?"

"Ash, look at this." Tyler pointed at a black gadget on the ground that glowed in blue. Ash recognized it as a Team Rocket Device and shouted, "GET AWAY FROM IT!" The device however, did not expand into a rocket or a cage, but merely a hologram. There were three faces that appeared: A man with purple hair, a woman with pink hair, and a Meowth.

"Prepare for trouble!" the woman yelled

"And make it double!" the man replied

They alternated the rest of the lines as if it were a poem.

"To protect the world from devastation!"

"To unite all people within our nation!"

"To denounce the evils of truth and love!"

"To extend our reach to the stars above!"

"Jessie!"

"James!"

"Team Rocket blasts off at the speed of light!"

"Surrender now or prepare to fight!"

"Meowth, that's right!" the Meowth yelled

Ash felt anger swooping in his stomach. "Team Rocket!" he yelled
"Where is Serena?"

The three of them laughed.

"We have your twerpy friend in our hideout!" Meowth said, pointing behind him. Ash saw Serena bounded with ropes, struggling to move.

"Let her go!" Ash cried indignantly

Meowth laughed and turned back to Ash.

"Jessie, make him understand!" Meowth said

"My pleasure." Jessie replied "Give us all your pokemon and we'll let her go!"

Ash was angrier than ever.

"Like you'll give her back after that!" he said

"Pika Pika!" Pikachu added

James smiled. "You have today to decide." he said "Or else we'll be leaving. And once you say yes, leave your pokeballs here."

The hologram faded and the device morphed into a bag.

"Team Rocket!" Ash shouted "I shoulda known!"

Ash didn't know whether to be relieved or afraid. He was happy that Serena had not chosen to leave him, but he was also worried about what to do next.

"What do we do now?" Bonnie asked, taking the words from Ash's mouth.

Ash saw Clemont's glasses light up and he instantly knew what was going to happen.

"The future is now, thanks to science!" Clemont cried "Clemontic

gear, on! I thought we would encounter a situation precisely like this one! I call this, the Golden Pokeball!" Clemont pulled out a pokeball, but it was just a normal pokeball.

Ash looked at him. _"Has he gone mad?" _Ash thought.

"What will that do?" Tierno asked

Clemont laughed.

>"Have you ever heard of The Golden Ponyta?" he asked<p>

Ash looked around. Tyler, Shauna, Tierno, and Bonnie all had blank expressions too.

"Alright," Clemont said "Let me explainâ€|"

[The Golden Ponyta...]

A thousand years ago, the nations of Sinnoh and Hoenn were involved in a battle that shook all of earth. The honorable people of Hoenn gathered together to defeat the evil king of Sinnoh. People and Pokemon together fought day after day, but no one was able to win. Finally, a Pokemon master by the name of Odysseus thought of the perfect plan: To construct a golden Ponyta so huge that all of Hoenn's pokemon and trainers could fit inside and disguise it as a gift for Sinnoh. Then, once the Ponyta entered into the Sinnoh region, all of the troops inside would come out, and take over Sinnoh once and for all! It worked just as planned. The king fell for it. In the middle of the night, the soldiers of Hoenn came out of the Ponyta and ended the rule of the evil king.

Ash was listening to every syllable with interest. It was a good story, but how was this going to get Serena back?

"Now what do we do?" he asked

Clemont smiled.

"This pokeball, unlike others, can hold humans inside it! One of us will go inside, until i release it. It has a camera on it so I can see what is going on. Team Rocket will likely take this pokeball back to the hideout where Serena is. Then, the rest of us will come over." Clemont explained. "But i only have one, so only one will be able to go in."

Ash instantly jumped up.

"I'll go!" he said

Clement nodded. "I knew you would Ash! But that means you can take a pokemon with you, as they will think this ball belongs to your pokemon!"

Ash knew his choice already, without even having to think.

"PIkachu, you ready?" Ash asked

"Pika Pika!" the mouse Pokemon replied

"Alright, let's go!" Clemont yelled. Clemont clicked on the

Pokeball's button, and Ash felt himself being sucked into something. The world around him was dizzy, and he shut his eyes. When he opened them, he found himself inside a room, with no windows or doors. It was made completely out of foam. There was a black gadget in the middle of it.

"Okay Ash," Clemont said "There's a device in here that lets me see what's outside. You can also talk to me through the black gadget, and Team Rocket won't be able to hear you. I'll let you out once I see the hideout Team Rocket was in."

"Alright." Ash said

Clemont, Bonnie, Tierno, Tyler, and Shauna all dropped their pokeballs inside Team Rocket's bag.

"Ash, we're counting on you." Clemont said "I trust you to get these and Serena back."

"You got it!" Ash said confidently. "Serena, don't worry. I'm coming!" he thought

A single claw shot out of the air and snatched the bag.

4. Chapter 4: The Master is here

[Ash]

Clemont and the others returned to the inn, where Clemont turned on his computer and started monitoring Ash and Pikachu.

"Okay Ash," Clemont said "You're currently in Team Rocket's balloon, hovering over the forest.

"Got it." Ash replied with a smile

"You can do it Ash!" Bonnie cried

Ash lay inside his Pokeball, staring around. The whole place was covered in this black foam, with nothing except Pikachu at his side. He looked around and could only think of one person, and wondered how she was feeling right now.

"I get why you hate being in a Pokeball." he said to the mouse Pokemon

"Pika Pika! Pi-Pika-Chu!" Pikachu nodded and smiled, curling up against Ash.

Ash sighed and turned back to the black device.

"Anything now, Clemont?" he asked

"Let's see," Clemont replied "We're nearing some place. The Meowth balloon is in descent! Now! I see something! It's a pretty big building, but it looks like no one's used it in ages."

"Alright, let me out!" Ash said impatiently, wanting to see Serena more than ever.

"Ash, not yet. Team Rocket can still see you. You're just outside the building right now. Wait until you're alone and then I'll eject you." Clemont replied

Ash waited tensely, his heart pounding.

"I see Serena!" Clemont said, "She's tied up in furthest room down this hall!"

Ash smiled and turned to Pikachu. "Ready buddy?"

"Pika pika!"

"Okay Ash, you and Pikachu are gonna be alone in a closet with the rest of the Pokemon! I'm letting you out, but you're on your own for a while, until we get there. But don't touch the bag, it has an alarm on it that will warn Team Rocket!" Clemont said

Ash felt himself being thrown out of the foam room. The world around him was fuzzy at first, but everything came back into focus. He saw the small closet he was in. There were two Team Rocket uniforms hanging on one of the walls. Ash listened to see if Team Rocket was still there, but he heard nothing.

"I'm gonna check for them real fast. Stay hidden in case they find me." he whispered to Pikachu.

Ash pushed the door open, but there was no one in sight. He saw the room clearly now. It was a large space filled with machines and other strange gadgets. There were five doors down a hallway. Ash heard three voices whooping in the distance. "So they're celebrating," Ash thought "Well this party's over!"

Ash ran down the hallway until he reached the last door. "Here goes." he told himself. Team Rocket is in there, and I'm gonna teach them a lesson about stealing, he thought, as he pushed the door open.

"You might think I'm brash!" Ash yelled, raising his fists in a fighting stance "But the Master's here, and his name is Ash!"

"What?" someone said, laughing "They're outside!"

And there she was, sitting in the corner, with ropes binding her. She looked as she normally did, but without her signature hat. Ash was at a loss for words. He didn't know what to say to her. This was the first time it felt hard to talk to Serena. After staring at each other for a while, Ash stammered a shaky greeting.

"H-hi S-S-Serena!"

Serena looked at him for about half a second, then smiled. Ash had never been happier in his life. He wrapped both his arms around Serena and buried his face against her shoulder.

"I-I'm so sorry!" he gasped

"It's okay!" Serena said as she struggled for breath

"I was so inconsiderate! This is all my fault!"

Serena felt herself crying too.

"Ash, I'm sorry too," she sobbed "I overreacted. I shouldn't have been mad at you. This is my fault too."

Ash wiped the tears off his face and untied the ropes around Serena.

"Come on," he said "Let's get to the Pokemon."

Serena started to blush redder and redder. Ash, of course, didn't really notice, but he did feel that Serena was walking a little too close to him.

"Ash?" Serena whispered "Did you really agree to that horrible deal just for me?"

Ash nodded, with the faintest trace of a grin. Serena felt herself turn even redder than before.

"Soâ€|" she said, trying to hide her face, "Now what?"

Ash grabbed Serena's hand and led her inside the closet with the Pokemon inside.

"Now, we wait for Clemont to arrive with backup." Ash said

"Honestly though, 'The Master is here and his name is Ash?' What were you thinking?" Serena replied, laughing. Ash pulled his hat lower, covering up his cheeks, which were beginning to burn. Serena looked around in the closet. The space was small, and she couldn't move away from Ash. She felt herself turning red as she wanted to just hold him in her arms for rescuing her. Then, her eyes fell on the Pokeballs.

"Let's get them out!" Serena said, reaching for the bag

"No!" Ash yelled "It's wired with an alarm! They'll hear us!"

It was too late. The moment Serena's hand touched the bag, a jolt of electricity filled the room. Both Ash and Serena were shocked, until their bodies felt numb. Then, a loud alarm went off, ringing through the building.

"What do we do now?" Ash groaned

Serena looked around and her eyes fell on the Team Rocket uniforms.

"I have an idea." she said with a wink "Close your eyes while I change."

Jessie, James, and Meowth were strolling along, until they heard the alarm.

"What?" James yelled "The Twerp Pokemon!"

All three of them rushed back into their hideout and ran to the closet as fast as they can. To their horror, it opened right in front of them.

"Prepare for trouble!" a girl's voice cried, ringing through the building. Serena stood in the doorway, hair gleaming, with a smile as she posed in her Team Rocket attire.

"And make it double!" Ash yelled, coming into view as well

Team Rocket looked indignant. They were all furious.

"Those are our uniforms!" Jessie yelled indignantly, pointing at them. "Stealing isn't right!"

Ash and Serena continued, ignoring them.

"To protect the world from devastation!"

"To unite all people within our nation!"

"To pronounce the joys of truth and love!" Serena said, winking at Ash

Ash grinned back and continued, "To send you back to the stars above!"

"Serena!"

"Ash!"

Ash put a hand on Serena's shoulder and whispered, "I got a better line for them!"

"My Pikachu is faster than light! Surrender now, cause you'll lose the fight!"

Just as Ash hit the last syllable, the mouse Pokemon soared through the air, rushing past Team Rocket, and in front of Ash and Serena.

"PIKA PIKA!" the yellow Pokemon yelled, turning to face Team Rocket

"Twerps!" Jessie yelled "Copyright infringement! I will sue you all for this! Gourgeist, come on out and use dark pulse!"

The pumpkin-like ghost flew out and launched a dark sphere at Ash and Serena.

"Okay Pikachu, counter with electro-ball!"

The two balls of energy collided, resulting in a massive explosion of smoke.

"I'll get my Pokeballs back!" Serena said "They took them off me."

Serena ran past Ash and began running through the room, frantically searching.

"Oh no you don't!" Meowth yelled, drawing his claws. "You touch anything and I use fury swipes on ya bub!"

Serena's eyes fell towards a small bag sitting on a table. She reached and grabbed her hand on it, but Meowth was prepared. He slashed with his claws, nearly hitting Serena.

"No!" Ash yelled "Don't you dare! Pikachu, use Iron tail on Meowth!"

Pikachu leapt into the air, and smacked the cat with his tail, sending him soaring towards the walls, where he smashed against a machine and fainted.

"Well done buddy!" Ash said

"Pika pika!"

James yelled in frustration and drew a pokeball from his pocket.

>"I've had enough of twerps for one day!" he yelled, "Go Inkay and use psybeam!"<p>

The little ghost flew out of the ball and cast its psychic attack on Pikachu.

"Dodge!" Ash yelled, but Pikachu couldn't dodge. It was a direct hit. "Pikachu, no!"

Jessie laughed and said, "Now we've got you twerps right where we want you! Gourgeist, dark pulse on the twerpet!"

"Inkay, you too, use psybeam!" James added.

Serena was just about to grab her Pokeballs, when she saw a dark ball of energy moving towards her. She closed her eyes, waiting for the ball to hit. But it never came. Serena would never forget this moment, the roar of anger, followed by the cry of pain. Ash leapt in front of her, taking the hit to his chest, before falling over, unconscious.

"Ash, no!" Serena cried. Her shock was quickly replaced by anger, as she grabbed her Pokeballs back.

"Okay Braixen, come on out!" she yelled

The fox flew out of the Pokeball and bore a furious expression.

"Braixen, flamethrower! Hit them hard for me!"

Braixen launched the wave of fire from the end of her stick, which flew towards Jessie and James.

"Wobbuffet, you're up!" Jessie cried

"Wo-bbu-ffet!" the blue pokemon yelled, absorbing the fire and releasing it back in a plume. It struck Braixen in the chest, and the fox was hidden from view from the smoke that followed.

>"Braixen, no!" Serena yelled<p>

But when the smoke cleared, Braixen was still standing, bearing a huge smile.

"Okay Braixen, use scratch on Wobbuffet!"

Braixen extended its claws and lashed at the blue Pokemon, knocking it out of its way.

"Now, hit them with a fire blast!"

Braixen unleashed its wave of fire and sent Jessie and James flying backwards with their Pokemon.

"Oh noâ€|" Jessie moaned "Here it comes!"

Meanwhile, Pikachu and Meowth began fighting again, fury swipes against iron tail. They clashed and dodged, until Pikachu leapt through the air and smacked Meowth in the back, knocking him into Jessie and James.

"Okay Braixen, finish this with flamethrower! Pikachu, you too, use thunderbolt!"

The two Pokemon charged up their attacks and launched them together at Team Rocket, who was sent through the roof.

"WE'RE BLASTING OFF AGAIN!" they shouted

"Back to the stars above!" Serena said, grinning, until she remembered Ash, lying next to her. He was breathing, but his eyes were closed.

"Oh Ash," she whispered "Thanks for doing that for me."

"Anything for you dear." he replied, in a barely audible voice

Serena jumped in shock and looked at Ash, whose eyelids were now beginning to flutter.

"By the way," he said, pushing himself up "What did you mean by 'the joys of truth and love?'"

Serena blushed.

"Oh thatâ€|" she replied "Well here's the thing-

She never finished. Ash slumped over again and was unconscious.

"Really Ash?" she said, annoyed. "He must still be confused after that psybeamâ€|"

When Ash woke up, he found himself lying on a warm and comfortable bed.

"What the-?" he muttered "Where am I?"

Ash saw Tyler standing over him, holding a camera. He was accompanied by a Charmeleon.

"Ash is awake!" Tyler yelled

Bonnie and Clemont rushed inside the room, staring at him.

"Are you alright?" Clemont asked

"I guess," Ash replied "What happened?"

"Well we arrived soon after, but you were unconscious." Clemont explained. "So we brought you here."

Ash looked and saw Tierno and Tyler staring down at him.

"When did they get here?" he asked, pointing at the two.

"Ash?" Tyler asked "You don't remember anything?"

"No," Ash said "Not really, why? Did something happen?"

Shauna and Serena walked in too. Ash looked around wildly and yelled, "Can someone tell me what's going on? All I remember is losing to Clemont a few minutes ago! How did I get here?"

The rest of them just shook their heads.

"Maybe the confuse took away his recent memories." Clemont said "But he seems fine now. Let's let him rest."

All of them left the room, and someone turned the light off. Ash settled down in bed, but didn't really feel all that great. He lied to his friends, which never felt good. In reality, his memory was still just as clear as ever. But he was still thinking about Serena. Did he like her? He had taken a dark pulse and a psybeam for her. He had risked all his pokemon just to save her. But something made him feel uncomfortable.

"No." he said firmly "No way. That stuff is for Brock."

Someone else laughed. Someone Ash couldn't see.

"You really do like her, don't you?" Shauna said "I knew you were lying, and she does too. You don't hide things well, Ash. Lying just isn't you."

"I don't know what you're talking about!" Ash said adamantly "Now let me sleep please!"

Shauna laughed.

"Okay Ash," she said "But she likes you too."

Ash sighed. Looks like tonight was going to be rough too. He wondered what Serena would look like in this dream.

[Ash]

For the next week, every day was always the same. Ash's training wasn't going great. Half the time, he would be looking around to see where Serena was. In fact, he even let Pikachu take a full on water shuriken from Greninja, because he wasn't paying attention. Ash wasn't able to sleep well either. Every night it was about Serena. Some dreams were good, like the one he had last night, where he and Serena were leaning against each other while riding a roller coaster. Others were frightening, usually involving long falls and darkness. And some were just simply weird. These feelings consumed Ash every single day. Today, Ash found himself sitting in his room, thinking.

"_Damn, I really wish I could talk to someone. This whole thing is so confusing." he thought_ _"Oh I know, I can ask Brock and Misty!"_

Ash picked up the phone in his room and dialed Misty's number. After ringing three times, Ash heard the familiar voice of his friend from his first ever PokÃ©mon journey.

"Misty, you there?" Ash asked, "Misty, I need your help!"

"Ash? It's been so long!"

"It has?" Ash asked, "Seems only yesterday that we were strolling around Indigo with Brock."

"Oh grow up Ash!" she said "So where are you now?"

"I'm in Kalos right now," he said back "Lumiose City!"

"Really Ash? That's where I'm going! I'm going there for the Christmas Festival!" Misty said happily.

"Yeah I kinda wanted to go too." Ash said back. "I heard the view at the top of Lumiose tower is beautiful, and I kind of wanted to bring a girl there too. I guess it's kinda a custom."

"Really, Ash?" Misty said, surprised. "Well she would be okay with going with you!"

"What? I haven't even asked her yet though!" Ash said "It's what I wanted to ask you about."

"Yes?" Misty asked. The conversation continued.

"Well there's this girl, with the prettiest light brown hair and bright blue eyes."

"Who? What's her name? What does she look like? What color hair does she have?"

"Woah! Woah! Misty calm down! One at a time!"

"Sorry Ashâ€|You know how it was between usâ€|Not a topic I enjoy talking much aboutâ€|"

"It's alright Misty. Her name is Serena and-"

"The performer? Her? You like her?"

"Well yeah. I think she's a pretty amazing person, but she is just so cute. Ever since we started travelling together, I felt like she was a part of me. A week ago, she even saved me from Team Rocket!"

"You're travelling with her?"

"Well yeah. We kinda support each other, you see. She means a lot to me."

"How dare you!" Misty cried "I thought you had called to ask me to come with you!"

"You left me with nothing, Misty! When I needed you, you left me." Ash said angrily

"I'm sorry Ash. I really wanted to stay with you, but my family needed me!"

They talked about their past more and more, and Ash remembered the many times that Misty had helped him out when he needed it. It would be wrong to hurt her like this. Besides, he couldn't ask Serena. He was scared that he would be rejected and Serena wouldn't want to be with him anymore.

"Hey Misty?" Ash asked "I think we could go together!"

"Really Ash?" Misty asked "That'll be great!"

He hung up and then turned to Pikachu.

"Hey buddy," he said "I'm so lost. I don't know what to do! I want to ask Serena, but I'm afraid she'll leave me forever! And I promised I would go with Misty, but if Serena does like me, wouldn't that ruin my relationship with her if I went with Misty?"

Pikachu shook his head and gave Ash an encouraging look.

"Pika Pika. Pi-Pika-chu!"

Ash shrugged. "Well it was worth a tryâ€| I really wish I could understand youâ€| "

Ash buried his face into his hands and sighed. Outside, the girl practicing her performance dropped Braixen's branch on the ground, causing the flame to burn out.

[Serena]

"Wow," Serena whispered. "So that's how he feels about meâ€|"

Tears of relief streamed down Serena's eyes. So Ash did care about her. He did like her. She couldn't have been happier. Serena wiped the tears off her eyes and sighed. All this time she had been worried that Ash didn't feel the same way she did. But all that worry was gone. Everything would be fine once she told Ash how she felt the same way. Except...Ash had promised to see Misty.

[Ash]

After getting dressed, Ash went to have lunch with his friends, and decided to tell them about what was happening today.

"So," he said "I'm meeting an old friend here today and we're going to Lumiose Tower later."

Serena, who had already heard, chose to stay silent.

"That's great Ash!" Clemont said, "I hope you guys have fun!"

"Yeahâ€|funâ€|." Ash said, scratching his head. "I think she's coming here soon!"

Just as he finished the sentence, the restaurant door flew open. A girl with orange hair, a tank top, and blue shorts walked in. Ash couldn't help but feel that she had gotten more attractive since they last saw each other. He felt himself turning slightly red, as she walked towards him.

>"So, Misty...How ya doin'?" he asked, trying to sound as confident as possible<p>

"I'm great!" she said "Glad to see you're doing well."

"I'm Bonnie and this is Dedenne!" Bonnie said, indicating the orange mouse in her bag

"I'm Clemont, Bonnie's sister!" Clemont said.

Bonnie suddenly jumped up from her seat and grabbed Misty's hand.

"She's a keeper!" she yelled, "Please, will you take care of my brother? I can't always look out for him!"

Clemont turned red and said, "Bonnie, I told you to stop this!" His arm grabbed Bonnie and dragged her back to her seat. Clemont was still red.

"And who might this lovely lady be?" Misty asked, turning to Serena

"Oh, hi!" Serena said "I'm Serena! I'm a Pokemon performer!"

[Serena]

"The one who _almost_ became Kalos Queen?" Misty replied, with the slightest bit of sarcasm.

"Yep, that's me." Serena said. She couldn't help but feel worried. This morning, she was sure that Ash liked her, but now, with Misty here, Serena couldn't help but wonder. Ash was having a similar debate in his head. Misty was really pretty as well, and despite her presumptuous attitude, was really a good friend to have.

"So, Ash, wanna have a battle?" Misty asked

Serena felt this urge in her heart. If she was able to beat Misty in a battle, perhaps, she would be better? Maybe Ash might prefer her over Misty?

"Well, to be honest I'm feeling a bit tired." Ash replied, running his fingers through his hair. "But if you really want to-"

"You can battle me." Serena said, finishing off Ash's sentence with a grin.

"Alright, you're on!" Misty yelled. What can a Pokemon performer do to me? I'm a gym leader and she's just a performer who looks good._

"Don't underestimate her, Misty!" Ash warned. "She pretended she was me once and did a fantastic job of battling with my Pikachu? Isn't that right?"

Serena couldn't help but turn red.
>"Uh-oh! I guess?" she said<p>

"Well we'll see how good you really are!" Misty yelled, "Let's battle! One Pokemon each!"

They went inside Lumiose gym to battle. Clembot was the referee..

"The Pokemon battle between Serena and Misty begins now!" he said

Misty smiled. "Watch this Ash! Golduck, come on out!"

The blue duck Pokemon shot out of her Pokeball and appeared in the battlefield.

"No way!" Ash said "That's your Psyduck?"

"Sure is!" Misty said, grinning

"Okay, in that case, Braixen, you're up!" she said, bringing out her fox.

"Hmm," Clemont said, "Serena knows Misty has the type advantage, but she's still using Braixenâ€| I wonder what she's up to!"

"Okay Golduck, use hydropump!" Misty said

The duck opened its mouth, releasing a large fountain of water towards Braixen.

"Counter that with fire blast!" Serena said

The fox released its own wave of fire, pushing back against the hydro pump. Both attacks collided and exploded in the middle of the battlefield, filling the air up with smoke. When the smoke cleared, Braixen and Golduck were glaring at each other.

"Okay Braixen, use scratch!" Serena said

"Counter with fury swipes!" Misty cried

The duck and the fox lashed at each other with equally vicious claws, but none was able to get the advantage over the other.

"Okay, now use hydropump again!" Misty yelled

The duck opened its mouth and released the gust of water again. Braixen was barely able to avoid it. This time, Serena noticed something. When Golduck attacked, it was unable to move. If only she could attack while it was attacking. "_What if I attacked while Golduck was attacking me? What if I let Braixen take a direct hit, but also land a direct hit on Golduck? Wouldn't that work?"_ she thought, "_I just need to out-damage Golduck!"_

"Golduck, use water pulse!" Misty said again

This was her chance.

"Braixen, hidden power now!"

Giant meteors started raining down on Golduck just as the ball of water flew towards Braixen, hitting it directly in the face. Braixen yelled in pain, but it worked just as Serena thought it would. The giant meteors crashed down on Golduck, one after another, until there was only smoke. When the smoke cleared, Braixen was standing strong, over the unconscious form of Golduck.

"Golduck is unable to battle, so Braixen is the winner! Which means, Serena wins!" Clemont said

"We did it Braixen!" Serena cried, hugging the fox. Misty stared in surprise, trying to figure out what had just happened.

"Good thinking, Serena!" she said, although she was disappointed. Misty pulled out her Pokeball and was about to return Golduck, when a loud rumbling filled the room.

"What's going on!" Ash yelled, nearly falling over. The wall suddenly burst open, and a ten foot tall robot smashed its way onto the battlefield.

"HAHAHAHA!" someone laughed, "Prepare for trouble!"

"And make it double!" James replied

"To protect the world from devastation!"

Misty smacked herself in the head. "Seriously, still?" she said

"Silence, little twerp!" Meowth yelled, but his anger turned into surprise. "Hey," he said "I thought you were back in Kanto!"

"Well you're gonna be sorry for doing this!" Misty yelled, "Horsea come on out and use watergun!"

The seahorse flew out of the Pokeball and aimed a jet of water at the machine, but it might as well have spat at it.

"Alright, you twerps," Jessie said. "You took our uniforms so we'll be taking your Pokemon!"

The giant robot extended an arm and began sucking everything towards it. Braixen and Serena were flying through the air, being pulled along with Horsea and Golduck.

"No!" Ash yelled, jumping up, "Pikachu, use thunderbolt!"

This attack was useless as well. Pikachu started to be sucked up as well. Ash grabbed onto its tail, trying to bring it back, but he soon found himself lifted in the air. He was thrown inside a giant container within the machine and fell right on something soft.

"Looks like that's none too few!" Meowth said "Got Braixen, Golduck, and Pikachu too!"

The robot flew through the air and was gone.

"Ash! Serena!" Clemont called, "No! Come back!"

Ash felt a small Pokemon landing on his chest from a hole above the container.

"You alright, Pikachu?" he asked

"Pika Pika!" the Pokemon said

Ash felt his arms and legs trapped under the weight of the Pokemon.

"Ash!" Serena yelled, "Ash I can't breathe!"

"I can't move!" Ash replied

Serena used all her strength to put Braixen back inside her pokeball, freeing up the space. She and Ash were now able to move more freely. Although the space was still confined, Ash could now look around.

"Well now what?" he asked

"Looks like we're stuck." Serena said, "And there's no way out!"

Tears of hopelessness began to roll down her eyes.

"I'm too young to die like this!" she wailed

"Me too!" Ash cried, wrapping his arms around Serena's neck, his own tears coming out.

"I'll never forget you Ash!" Serena cried

"Me either!" Ash yelled back

Golduck turned to Pikachu and winked.

"How's that?" he asked

Pikachu and Horsea were laughing.

"I woulda won if Misty let me use psychic! See how hopeless they are?" Golduck said, choking back laughter.

Of course, Ash and Serena didn't understand a single word. This would be one of those memories that they wouldn't want to remember.

6. Chapter 6: Altar of Sacrifice

[Serena]

"Ash! I d-don't wanna die! I need to marry you first!" Serena yelled. Although her mind was protesting, she felt something else moving her mouth.

"Me too! I need you Serena!" Ash said, with his arms wrapped tightly around her.

"_Stop this, you stupid duck! You're making me look like an idiot!_" Serena thought, trying her best to break free. "AHHHHHHHHH!" she yelled, stretching her arms out. Serena felt control come back into her body.

>"Don't you dare do that again, you stupid duck!" she yelled, massaging her limbs. Ash's deathly embrace had left her sore.<p>

"Golduck, Golduck!" the blue Pokemon said, laughing. Pikachu and Horsea joined in.

Ash was indignant as well.

"Can't you see we're in a bad situation!" he yelled "It's bad enough without the three of you messing everything up more!" he yelled, causing all three Pokemon to back away in fright.

Suddenly, the container started shaking rapidly.

"Alright, who's doing that?" Ash said

All three Pokemon looked at each other in fear. The shaking started getting worse. Serena began to lose focus of the room around her, as the shaking continued.

"Ash!" she yelled, grabbing onto him as tightly as she could.

"Serena!" he said, holding onto her as well. He quickly grabbed his Pokeball and returned Pikachu inside it.

Serena buried her face into Ash's shoulder, hoping this would end soon. She closed her eyes, but the shaking didn't stop. She felt herself being hurled through the air, falling and falling and falling. She felt Ash being pulled off her as she fell through the air, not knowing what was going on. With a crash, Serena felt herself hitting something soft. The world around her stopped spinning, but she was dizzy. She lay with her eyes closed for about an hour, until feeling returned to her limbs. She opened her eyes. The world around

her had changed from the modernized Lumiose City view to a large green forest.

"Oh, now where am I?" she asked

Serena looked around, and realized that she had fallen on a pile of leaves. She checked her pockets, and fortunately, all her Pokeballs were there.

"Phew, that was close." she muttered

But something caught her eye. Her eyes fell upon a pair of legs, with the rest of the body obscured by a bush. Serena ran over and pushed aside the bush, revealing the body of Ash Ketchum. He wasn't breathing.

"Ash?" Serena asked, shaking his body. "Ash! Can you hear me?"

Serena began to grow hysterical. Tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Ash! How can I live without you?" she yelled, planting her face into his chest.

"He's not dead." someone said

Serena turned around and looked up. A ghostly figure was standing before her, with a face obscured by smoke.

"W-who are you?" she cried, screaming in panic

"That doesn't matter," she said "But you can call me X. And I can show you how to bring him back."

"How?" Serena said, her fear turning into desperation. "Please, tell me!"

X laughed. "Good," he said, "Let us begin."

X pointed towards a volcano in the distance. "We need to go there. The road ahead is treacherous, but I imagine you're more than prepared." he said

"B-but how?" Serena asked, panicking. "What do I have to do?"

"If you really love him you wouldn't be afraid." X said, "You would do anything to bring him back."

Serena felt herself turning red.

"How do you know-?" she sputtered

"I know everything." X replied. "I see it."

This guy was really a creep, she thought. But if he could save Ash, she had to listen.

"Okay, let's go!" she said

Serena followed X through the forest, climbing over logs and rocks,

traversing over streams, and going through mud. Twice she slipped and scraped her knees, but every time, she would always get up.

"We're almost out of the forest!" X said. "But soon, we will encounter the wild Pangaro!"

Just as he said that, three giant Pangaro appeared, blocking the path.

"X, what now?" Serena said, looking at them in shock. But X disappeared in a puff of smoke.

"_What a scumbag!" _she thought angrily

The Pangaro were nearing her now. She began to fumble with her pokeballs, looking for the right one for this situation.

"Okay, I got it!" she said, "Braixen, come on out and hit them with hidden power!"

The fox appeared out of her Pokeball and shot the wave of fire at the Pangaro.

"Sylveon, come out and help with swift!" she said, releasing Sylveon. Sylveon shot bright yellow stars out of her tails, which smashed against the Pangaro.

"Now, Pancham, help us out and use stone edge!"

The panda flew out of her pokeball and gave her a belligerent nod, before unleashing the blue jagged rocks at the Pangaro, causing a massive explosion. When the smoke cleared, all three Pangaro were gone.

"Well done, Serena." X said, reappearing in a haze of smoke. Serena was terrified. How did he do it?

"What the heck?" Serena asked, "How?"

"Only you can see me," X replied

The road ahead was now up a rocky mountain, with many ledges. It was extremely steep too. There were jagged rocks, sticking out, but it would be suicide to even try.

"Climb up the mountain," X said "You are very close to the top."

"I can't climb this!" Serena yelled indignantly

"Do you want your precious Ash back?" X taunted

Serena glared at him. "Of course!" she yelled.

"Good, then climb!" X shouted.

"H-how?" Serena asked. The answer came to her. "Pancham," she said, "Use stone edge to help me up!"

"Good, good." X said "So you aren't stupid."

Serena ignored him. She grabbed the jagged rocks, pushing herself up, with Pancham laying the floor underneath her. Serena was up halfway in no time, To her horror, X was floating in the air beside her.

"Problem?" X asked

"How are you here? Don't you need to be standing on something?" Serena asked, pointing at his feet.

"Like I said, only you can see me." X said

Serena shook her head and kept climbing. Soon, she found herself at the top of the volcano. She looked down. It looked like a long drop. The mouth was covered in dense smoke, making her unable to see anything.

"Well done, Serena." X said, "Now, for our final step."

"What is it?" Serena asked

"Do you know what this place is?" X asked

"N-no?" Serena replied

"This is the altar of sacrifice. Only once, every a hundred years, does it open. Here, a person can willingly sacrifice their own life to bring back someone else. If you look closely, there's a yellow light within the smoke."

Serena saw the light glowing.

"Once the sun sets," X continued "It will fade, and Ash will be gone forever."

Serena stared down.

"So you're saying...If I jump in and kill myself, Ash will come back?" she said

"Precisely," X replied, "Now I'll be leaving."

X disappeared, leaving Serena staring down at the volcano. She thought of Ash, and how he was always there for her. How he had helped her when she was young, and how he supported her throughout this journey. He even risked everything for her just to see her safe and sound.

"I owe my life to you, Ash Ketchum." she said, wiping tears off her face. The volcano drew nearer and nearer. "Ash would do it for me." _she thought. "I owe everything to him."

Serena thought of Bonnie and Clemont, how they would feel. She thought of her mother, sitting at home, waiting for her daughter to return, only to find out she was gone. And she thought of Ash, how much pain he would feel if she had died because of him. She couldn't help but cry.

"Oh, what do I do?" she yelled. The sun was almost setting. The yellow light was getting less and less bright.

>"Ash," she whispered, "As much as I love you, I can't do this!"<p>

Her thoughts then floated to the good times Ash and her had together, eating, playing, and laughing. She remembered how Ash had stopped her from falling down that cliff back in Pokemon camp. She thought of how he had invited her to join his group. She thought of how he helped her when she got hurt back in Professor Oak's Pokemon camp.

"Oh Ash," she whispered. "Live for the both of us!"

Serena felt her feet slide off from the edge of the volcano, soaring down towards the yellow light. Her last glimpse was the waning sun, before she was engulfed in smoke.

[Ash, five hours ago.]

Ash buried his face into Serena's shoulder, hoping this would end soon. He closed his eyes, but the shaking didn't stop. He felt himself being hurled through the air, falling and falling and falling. He felt Serena being pulled away as he fell through the air, not knowing what was going on. With a crash, Ash felt himself hitting something soft. The world around him stopped spinning, but he was dizzy. He lay with his eyes closed for about an hour, until feeling returned to his limbs. He opened his eyes. The world around him had changed from the modernized Lumiose City view to a large green forest.

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"Serena?" Ash asked, shaking her body. "Serena! Can you hear me?"

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Just as he said that, three giant Pangaro appeared, blocking the path.

"X, what now?" Ash said, looking at them in shock. But X disappeared in a puff of smoke.

"_What a scumbag!" _he thought angrily

The Pangaro were nearing his now. He began to fumble with his pokeballs, looking for the right one for this situation.

"Okay, I got it!" he said, "Pikachu, hit them with thunderbolt!"

The mouse Pokemon unleashed his thunder attack at the Pangaro, causing them to stagger.

"Greninja, come out and help with water shuriken!" he said, releasing the froglike ninja. Greninja shot two blue stars out of his tails, which smahed against the Pangaro.

"Now, Hawlucha, help us out and use flying press!"

The parrot flew out of his Pokeball and gave his a belligerent nod, diving headfirst at the Pangaro, causing a massive explosion. When the smoke cleared, all three Pangaro were gone.

"Well done, Ash." X said, reappearing in a haze of smoke. Ash was shocked. How did he appear again?

"What the heck?" Ash asked, "How?"

"Only you can see me," X replied

The road ahead was now up a rocky mountain, with many ledges. It was extremely steep too. There were jagged rocks, sticking out, but it would be suicide to even try to climb them.

"Climb up the mountain," X said "You are very close to the top."

"I can't climb this!" Ash yelled indignantly

"Do you want your precious Serena back?" X taunted

Ash glared at him. "Of course!" he yelled.

"Good, then climb!" X shouted.

"H-how?" Ash asked. The answer came to him before X could respond.
"Hawlucha," he said, "Carry me up as I climb these rocks."

"Good, good." X said "So you aren't stupid."

Ash ignored him. He grabbed the jagged rocks, pushing himself up, with Hawlucha supporting him. Ash was up halfway in no time, to his horror, X was floating in the air beside his.

"Problem?" X asked

"How are you here? Don't you need to be standing on something?" Ash asked, pointing at his feet.

"Like I said, only you can see me." X said

Ash shook his head and kept climbing. Soon, he found himself at the top of the volcano. He looked down. It looked like a long drop. The mouth was covered in dense smoke, making him unable to see anything.

"Well done, Ash." X said, "Now, for our final step."

"What is it?" Ash asked

"Do you know what this place is?" X asked

"N-no?" Ash replied

"This is the altar of sacrifice. Only once, every a hundred years, does it open. Here, a person can willingly sacrifice their own life to bring back someone else. If you look closely, there's a yellow light within the smoke."

Ash saw the light glowing.

"Once the sun sets," X continued "It will fade, and Serena will be gone forever."

Ash stared down.

"So you're saying...If I jump in and kill myself, Serena will come

back?" he said

"Precisely," X replied, "Now I'll be leaving."

X disappeared, leaving Ash staring down at the volcano. He thought of Serena, and how she was always there for him. How she had helped him when he was feeling down and how she supported him throughout this journey. She even saved him from Team Rocket.

"I owe my life to you, Serena." he said, wiping tears off his face. The volcano drew nearer and nearer. _"Serena would do it for me." _he thought. _"I owe everything to her."_

Ash thought of Bonnie and Clemont, how they would feel. He thought of his mom, sitting at home, waiting for her son to return, only to find out he was gone. And he thought of Serena, how much pain she would feel if he had died because of her. He couldn't help but cry.

"Oh, what do I do?" he yelled. The sun was almost setting. The yellow light was getting less and less bright.

"Serena," he whispered, "As much as I love you, I can't do this!"

His thoughts then floated to the good times Serena and him had together, eating, playing, and laughing. He remembered how Serena took care of him when he was ill, or when he was hurt. He thought of how she had encouraged him after losing to Viola. And finally, he thought of how she had fought off Team Rocket and protected him. X was right. He did love her.

"Oh Serena," he whispered. "Live for the both of us!"

Ash felt his feet slide off from the edge of the volcano, soaring down towards the yellow light. His last glimpse was the waning sun, before he was engulfed in smoke.

Ash found himself lying in a pool of sweat. He was lying on a nice and comfortable bed. He turned his head around and saw Serena, who looked like she had just awoken too.

"Hey," Ash mumbled, looking at her. He saw that she was covered in sweat as well. "Is something wrong?" he asked

Serena looked at him. "I was gonna ask you the same question!" she said

Ash sighed. _Should he tell her about his dream? It would reveal a lot of thingsâ€|_

"Well," Ash said "I was falling down a volcano a few seconds ago, and now I'm here."

Serena's eyes lit up.

"What?" she said "That's what happened to me!"

>A dark ghost with red light at his neck floated by, his white plume following. Darkrai slowly ascended away into the sky, but not before catching Ash's eye.<p>

"Wow, a Darkrai!" Ash said, pointing

"I see it!" Serena said, staring in awe.

The Darkrai flew off into the sky, disappearing. Then, the door to the room burst open. Clemont ran inside, followed by Misty and Bonnie.

"You guys are safe!" he said "I was worried I overdid it with my EMP!"

"What?" Ash asked

"Well you see, after Team Rocket took you and Serena, I shot their machine with my laser, which caused it to crash in the middle of Lumiose city. Then, we defeated Team Rocket and took back the pokémon. I found you and Serena unconscious, so we brought you here." Clemont said proudly

"Well," Ash said "Thanks!"

"By the way," Clemont said, "That Misty girl is really something else. You shoulda seen how she handled Team Rocket!"

"That's Misty for ya!" Ash said happily, rolling into his pillow. His dream was scary and he wanted to forget about it. But it did tell him one thing. He really really liked Serena. Maybe even loved her.

For dummies: so basically ash and serena had the same dream caused by darkrai, except the roles were reversed, and in reality, they were both just unconscious after Clement shot down team rocket's machine and were brought into the hospital.

7. Chapter 7: Smooth

[Ash, three days later]

Ash and co. were about to resume their journey, but first they wanted to pass by Santalune city again to pick up supplies and visit Ash's friend Alexa and her sister Viola.

"Ash?" Serena said, as they were walking.

"Hmm?" he replied

"Would it be alright if you helped me with something?" Serena asked

"Um...sure?" he said, trying to hide his excitement. Here was an opportunity to impress her once again. "What is it?"

"Ash, can I tell you in private?" she asked

"Oohhh! So cute! You guys are meant for each other!" Bonnie said, dancing

Ash turned away, blushing slightly red. "Bonnie, stop!" Clemont said

The four of them stopped at the Santalune Pokemon Center, where Serena grabbed Ash's hand and dragged him behind the building, where they were alone.

"So...here's the thing," she began, unable to hide the redness of her cheeks. "Don't you dare laugh at me!"

"Why would I do that?" Ash asked

"You see, Ash," she said "Ever since that day with Team Rocket, I've kinda had this feeling."

"_Is she going to confess that she likes me or something?" _he thought

"Yeah?" Ash said, thinking he might as well tell her too. "Well I think I feel the same way." he began

"Great!" Serena said, "Then tell me what I need to do to beat Viola!"

Ash looked at her in shock.

"What did you say?" he asked, completely taken aback.

"Well you see," Serena began, "After beating Misty, I kinda want to try battling a few gyms, ya know? And who knows better than you on how to battle!"

Ash didn't know what to say. Not only did he come off as a complete moron, but now this girl wanted to be his rival?

"Well...um...I guess I can teach you a few tricks." he replied, feeling himself turn red with embarrassment.

"Oh my, what do we have here?" a voice said, "My sister's not gonna be very happy if she loses this one."

"Alexa!" Ash yelled, turning around to see the reporter. "Hi!"

Alexa smiled.

"Hello, Ash." she said, "And you too, Serena! I'm sure you'll do great!"

Serena blushed a little.

"Thanks," she said in a small voice, "I really appreciate it."

"Oh and by the way Ash," Alexa said, moving closer to him, "Learn how to be more smooth."

Ash jumped back in shock, feeling extremely embarrassed. He glared at Alexa. She laughed.

"Well I'm off!" Alexa said, "Bye!"

"Well now you know what Miette's like!" Serena whispered to herself

"Okay Serena," Ash said, "Let's do a practice battle. Two each."

"You're on!" Serena said back

"Okay Pikachu, you're up!" Ash said

"Pika pika!" the mouse yelled, cheeks glowing with electricity

"Pikachu, eh?" Serena asked, "In that case, I will use Sylveon!"

The fox-like pokemon shot out of her pokeball, as white and as pretty as the moon.

"Pikachu, thunderbolt!" Ash yelled

"Protect, quick!" Serena cried

The wave of electricity bounced against the green forcefield harmlessly.

"Not bad!" Ash said, "But watch this! Iron tail!"

Pikachu leapt into the air and swung its tail in an arc, before slamming it against Sylveon's head. The white fox soared backwards, but managed to land on its feet.

"Swift, now!" Serena cried

"Dodge!"

The mouse danced around all the stars, narrowly avoiding each one.

"Now, electroball!" Ash yelled.

"PIKACHU!" the mouse cried, unleashing its ball of electricity.

"Fairy wind!" Serena cried

Sylveon conjured a wind so strong that the electroball was pushed back towards Pikachu. It collided with the mouse in an explosion of smoke.

"Pikachu, no!"

When the smoke cleared, the mouse was unconscious.

"Nice one, Sylveon!" Serena cheered

"I'm impressed," Ash said, "But you haven't seen the last of me! Let's go Hawlucha!"

The parrot flew out of Ash's Pokeball with it's arms raised, ready to fight.

>"Hawlucha, use flying press!" Ash said<p>

"Haw-LUCHA!" the parrot yelled

"Quick, fairy wind!" Serena shouted

As Sylveon began to conjure the wind, Hawlucha had already hit her. Sylveon was knocked into the air, where it smashed against the ground, unconscious.

"Damn it!" Serena said, "Your Hawlucha is too fast!"

"Yeah?" Ash replied. He was beginning to grow worried though. "_What if she becomes better than me?" _he thought

"Okay, Braixen, come on out!" Serena cried, releasing her fiery fox.

"Alright, Hawlucha, use Karate Chop!"

"Counter with scratch!"

The parrot and the fox locked their arms together, none of them able to gain an advantage over the other. They held the stalemate for a few more seconds, before Ash realized that the longer this lasted, the worse he would come off as.

"Hawlucha, use high jump kick!" he shouted

Ash saw the smile form on Serena's lips and his heart skipped a beat.

"Fire blast!" Serena yelled.

Ash watched as the parrot was engulfed in a wave of flame, disappearing from sight.

"_Wow, I messed up badâ€|" _he thought "_Well done, Ash. Very smooth." _

When the smoke cleared, Hawlucha was lying on the ground, unmoving.

"Hawlucha, no!" Ash cried. He had lost and humiliated himself.

"HAWLUCHA!" the parrot roared suddenly.

Ash watched in shock as the parrot, damaged and burned, pushed itself up into a fighting stance. An idea popped into his head. What if Hawlucha dodged the fire attack with flying press? It was worth a try.

"Alright! I knew you could do it!" Ash said encouragingly, even though it was a lie. "Use high jump kick again!"

The parrot flew into the air, and just like Ash expected, Serena tried the same trick again.

"Dodge with flying press!" Ash yelled. It was too good to be true. The parrot dove underneath the flame just as he expected and charged towards Braixen.

"Quick, scratch!" Serena yelled, but Ash knew it was over

"Fly away and go into X-scissor!" he shouted

The parrot soared high into the sky, avoiding the fox's attack and came back down, slashing the fox twice across the chest, causing Braixen to stagger.

"Now, use high jump kick!"

Hawlucha planted its foot and smashed it down at Braixen, instantly knocking it down, unconscious.

"H-how?" Serena stammered, "I was gonna win!"

Ash was filled with relief. He wiped the sweat off his forehead.

"You are pretty good." he said, "You would make a great Pokemon trainer."

"Really?" Serena asked

"Yeah!" Ash said "You did really good today!"

Serena looked at him for a while before saying, "You know, someone told me that a long time ago."

"Who?"

"His name's Calem. He's a lot like you." Serena said, "When we were younger, we went to a demo Pokemon summer camp where we got to practice battling. Of course, he was the best. But I beat him. I actually beat him! That's when he said the exact same thing you said."

"Oh." Ash said, feeling slightly disappointed, even threatened. The way Serena talked about this Calem person suggested that they were close. "Where is he now?" Ash asked,

"Somewhere in Kalos, from what I've heard." Serena said, "He's probably training for the Kalos league, just like you!"

Ash didn't want to ask more.

"Alright, let's take a break for today. Tomorrow, you'll challenge Viola for your first badge, so get some rest." Ash said, looking for an excuse to be alone.

"Okay, thanks Ash!" Serena said brightly, as the two of them headed back.

[Tomorrow]

Serena couldn't sleep at all. It seemed really silly how one Pokemon battle had her this excited. But then again, it was her first. When the sun rose the next day, Serena was the first out of bed. She went to Ash's room to see if he was awake. Ash was still snoring, dreaming of his time in Sinnoh. Serena was about to leave, when Ash muttered, "Gary, don't go."

Serena turned around and looked at him in shock. _Who was Gary?_

"Gary, come back." Ash whispered

Serena walked over to Ash's bedside.

"Gary..." Ash whispered

"Yes?" Serena answered, despite not knowing who Gary was.

"Gary, she's so cute." he said again

"Who is?" Serena asked, answering for this mystery person once more.

"Serena." Ash whispered

Serena felt her heart skip a beat. She jumped back in shock.

"I really like her," Ash continued, "But I can't tell her."

Serena took a deep breath and continued.

"Why not?" she asked

"Because she doesn't like me." Ash said, "I'll get rejected and she'll start to avoid me. Promise me, you won't tell her. Please, Gary!"

"I-I won't!" Serena said. She noticed Ash's eyelids start to flutter. Their eyes met for a moment.

"Ash, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to wake you!" she said

Ash smiled and stretched.

"Don't worry, Gary," he said "I'm fine."

He winked at Serena and pulled the blanket over his face, leaving her stunned. She slowly backed away from his room, wondering what just happened. Meanwhile, Ash was laughing.

"Pikachu, now that's smooth!" he said, talking to the yellow Pokemon beside him

"Pika Pika." Pikachu said, shaking his head.

8. Bedtime Story Part 1

[Clemont, 4 hours ago]

"Hey big brother, can you tell me a bedtime story?" Bonnie said

"Sure," Clemont replied, "Now let's see. Oh I know! I'll tell you the full story of the Hoenn Ponyta!"

[1000 years ago, Sinnoh]

The weather was dark. Rain began to fall. Odysseus and his soldiers stood on the beach of Sinnoh, looking on. Behind him were four massive wooden ships, each bearing the Hoenn symbol on them.

"Odysseus!" A man yelled, running towards him. "We must run before King Priam's soldiers arrive! They have Machokes and Gliscors!"

Odysseus nodded. "Ajax, prepare the ship! Menelaus will be here soon with reinforcements!"

The man called Ajax gestured to the few dozen men around him.

"Prepare the ships! Get the buizel out!" he shouted

Odysseus climbed on the ship with Ajax and five other soldiers.

"Alright, sail to Hoenn!" Ajax barked

The anchors were removed from the side of the beach. The four ships began to move.

"Buizel, I choose you!" Odysseus yelled, pulling out his Pokeball. "Use water jet and get us out of here."

The other ships imitated him. Soon, about a dozen Buizel were called, each propelling their ship forward. Odysseus looked towards the beach of Sinnoh, which was getting smaller and smaller.

"Lord Dialga, give us your blessing!" Odysseus whispered

"Dialga isn't with us today," Ajax said, "Look up in the sky! Staraptors and Gliscors!"

"X-scissor!" some voices shouted in the distance, "Gust!"

The Gliscors attacked the boat furthest away from Odysseus, slashing at the Buizel and the soldiers. The Staraptors blew the ship aside, causing it to lose its course.

"Quickly, Blastoise, use hydro pump!" Odysseus commanded, releasing another Pokeball. The Blastoise shot jets of water, knocking the enemy Pokemon into the sea. But the sheer number was too many. Three of the four ships were now being overwhelmed. Odysseus' ship was the only one left. More Pokemon came. A man riding a Dragonite approached the ship, with a spear in his hands.

"Nowhere to go, Odysseus!" the man yelled

"I beg to differ, Hector!" Ajax bellowed. "Charizard, I choose you!"

Ajax's charizard was unlike any other. It was blue instead of orange, with a sinister white flame protruding from its tail.

"Charizard, hyperbeam!" Ajax yelled

"Dragonite, dodge!" Hector shouted

"Seismic toss!" Ajax yelled again

"Thunder punch!" Hector cried

The two dragons clashed in the air, neither able to get an advantage over the other.

"Honchkrow, use haze!" Odysseus cried, releasing a third Pokemon.
"Blastoise, shoot down all the others!"

The smoke engulfed Dragonite, as Charizard pulled away.

"Odysseus, we can't stay here any longer!" Ajax yelled, "The ship won't last!"

Someone threw a voltorb onto the dock of the boat.

"Voltorb, explosion!"

The ship exploded into two pieces. Water flowed in everywhere, causing the ship to sink into the water. Odysseus quickly returned his Buizel, Blastoise, and Honchkrow, before climbing onto Charizard with Ajax.

>"Fly west!" Ajax commanded<p>

"And that's all for today!" Clemont said, "You need to go to bed now."

"But it was just getting good!" Bonnie protested

"Sorry, maybe tomorrow." Clemont said

"Alright," Bonnie said, "But do they make it out alive?"

"Yes," Clemont said, "Ajax and Odysseus survive, yes."

Bonnie sighed in relief. "Alright, thanks big brother!" she said, "Good night!"

9. Chapter 8: Serena's First Gym Battle!

[Serena]

It was finally 8 am. Serena was prepared for her first ever gym battle.

"Today, I'm gonna win!" she said confidently, brushing her hair. She checked that all her Pokemon were ready, before heading downstairs to meet with Ash, Clemont, and Bonnie.

"Hey Serena!" Clemont said, smiling, "You excited?"

"Well, yeah!" she said, "First ever gym battle!"

"Serena don't worry too much," Ash said, "It's not like your

performances. If you lose you can always try again tomorrow."

"Gee, thanks!" Serena said sarcastically, "Way to believe in me."

But Serena knew Ash meant well. She really couldn't stay angry at him for more than a short period of time, even when she wanted to. Serena ate her sandwiches that Clemont had prepared and half skipped, half ran, until she was in front of Santalune gym.

"Hey Viola!" Serena yelled, pounding on the front door. "I'm ready!"

Viola came out, looking half-asleep. Her signature camera hung from her neck.

"What's up?" she said sleepily

"Viola, she's here to challenge you! Show some enthusiasm!" Alexa said, appearing beside her sister.

"What?" Viola said, suddenly snapping out of her daze. "You're the challenger?"

"Sure am!" Serena said brightly.

"But nevermind! I'm not losing to a performer!" Viola said

The group entered the gym and had their Pokeballs ready.

"Alright, Surskit, you're up!" Viola said, releasing the water-bug type.

"Surskit, eh?" Serena said, "Okay Braixen, come on out!"

The fox flew out of the pokeball, wielding its signature branch.

"Viola has the advantage," Bonnie said, "Why is Serena still using Braixen?"

"She's a lot like Ash!" Clemont said, "They have unique styles of battling."

Ash felt himself turn slightly red, but he focused on the battle.

"Alright, Surskit, use ice beam on the battlefield!" Viola said. The bug coated the entire ground with ice, making Braixen lose its balance.

"Picture perfect!" Viola said enthusiastically, "Now, use signal beam!"

"Dodge!" Serena said

The attack narrowly missed Braixen, but in the process of dodging, the fox slipped on the ice again and smashed onto the ground.

"My ice arena is picture perfect!" Viola said

"Well it won't be after this!" Serena yelled, "Hidden Power!"

Giant meteors rained down from the sky, crashing down towards Surskit. The bug dodged each of the rocks, but as the ice began to shatter, the bug began to lose its footing, falling over.

"Now, fire blast!" Serena cried

Before Viola could even grasp what had just happened, a wave of fire smashed into Surskit, covering it in smoke.

"Surskit, no!" Viola shouted. When the smoke cleared, an unconscious Surskit was left, battered and bruised.

"Surskit is unable to battle, which means, Braixen wins!"

"Alright Braixen!" Serena shouted, "Who said I can't battle?"

"Don't be so sure of yourself!" Viola cried, "Vivillon, come on out and use gust!"

The butterfly spread its wings out and waved them furiously, knocking Braixen back.

"Now, sleep powder!" Viola yelled

"Flamethrower!" Serena yelled, "Blast that powder away!"

The fire deflected the attack and pushed its way through the powder, hitting Vivillon directly. The butterfly sustained the hit and began to wobble in the air.

>"Vivillon, no!" Viola said.<p>

"Now, fire blast!" Serena said

"Dodge and use solar beam!" Viola said

The butterfly avoided the attack and began to charge up its solar beam.

"What will Serena do now?" Bonnie wondered, looking at Ash.

"I don't know. Looks like she's gonna take a big hit!"

Serena saw the beam moving. There was no way Braixen could withstand such a hit or dodge it. So why not take down Vivillon with it?

"Stand still and use hidden power!" Serena yelled. Just as the beam smashed the fox in the chest, giant rocks fell from the sky, raining down at the butterfly. One by one, they crashed down, obscuring the whole arena in smoke.

"Vivillon, no!" Viola cried

After an intense thirty seconds or so, the smoke cleared. Braixen lay slumped against a rock, eyes closed. Vivillon was sprawled on the ground, unconscious as well.

"Both Pokemon are unable to battle, which means this round is a tie, which means the victor is Serena!" the referee called.

"Yes!" she said, "We did it!"

"Well," Viola said, "You certainly are something. You'd make a great trainer!"

"Thank you!" Serena said, accepting the badge Viola handed her.

"You can become even better than Ash!" Viola whispered in her ear, "I'm sure then he'll notice you!"

Serena felt her cheeks burn red again.

"Well I kinda just wanted to try." she said, "I didn't think I would do so well."

"I told you so." a familiar voice said. Serena turned around to see a boy in a blue jacket with single-strap pack around his waist. He had a hat similar to Ash's but this one had two goggles on it. His hair was wild and black, but curved around his head. He might've passed off as Ash.

"You did really good." he said, "I knew you were something special."

"C-Calem!" Serena stammered, "H-hi!"

She was surprised to see how much he resembled Ash.

>"Who's this?" Ash asked, standing next to Calem. They stood about the same height and each wore the same expression of dislike towards the other.
"Calem." Serena said, "I told you about him, remember?"

"Yeahâ€|" Ash said, feeling a little uncomfortable.

"So, Calem, why are you here?" Serena asked

"When I heard you were here, I wanted to see you." he replied, "I'm gonna challenge Grant next for my 7th badge." Calem said eagerly, stretching his arms, "But I thought you were a performer? How come you're battling?"

"Well," Serena said, turning red, "I kinda wanted to try it out, you see. I never battled a gym before! Not even once!"

"You should come along with me!" Calem said, "We can go challenge Grant together!"

Serena was taken aback. She felt her knees watering.

"Wowâ€|" she said, "That's really nice of you!"

"Hey, think about it." he said, whispering in Serena's ear. "I really missed you since that day at camp."

Serena turned even redder, as she looked at Calem. He seemed so much like Ash, almost just as attractive. Calem decided to stay with Ash and the others at the Pokemon center on Serena's request. He got

along well with Clemont and Bonnie, but Ash felt that there was something off about him. Every now and then, Calem would shoot a nasty grin at Ash, as he was talking to Serena. Sometime during dinner, while Ash was in the bathroom, and Clemont was designing an invention with Bonnie, Calem began to talk with Serena. She told him all about her time with Ash and what they did together this past week.

"Serena, come with me!" he kept saying, "Don't you see, your selfish 'friends' are limiting you? Ash doesn't care about you!"

"That's not true." Serena said, "He might seem a bit odd at times, but he really does care about me. He saved me from Team Rocket."

"Serena," Calem said, "The guy called you stupid! He blamed you for his problems! Open your eyes!"

That was true. Ash did blame her. But didn't he also save her? Serena felt confusion boiling up.

"He saved me from Team Rocket, though!" Serena said.

"You saved him, you mean." Calem said. "Plus, he has his precious Misty, doesn't he? He doesn't care about you. Not the same way I do."

"Wh-what do y-you mean?" Serena said, her cheeks turning redder and redder.

"I really like you, Serena." Calem said, "I've always had a crush on you since that day at camp. I dreamed about you each day on my journey. After watching you on TV, I tried to find you again. Remember when we were young? Remember how much fun we had together, playing with each other?"

"Wowâ€|" Serena said, her face about to explode. "No one has ever said that to me before!"

Calem smiled and grabbed her hand.

"Ash Ketchum will only limit you. We can achieve greatness together!" he said

Serena looked at him. What he said did make sense, after all.

"I-I'll think about it." Serena said

Calem smiled at her.

>"How about this," he said "If Ash really cared about you, he would stop you from leaving. He would probably say something. Let's see how much he really cares about you! I promise you, he won't even miss you if you leave."<p>

The next morning, as Serena was asleep, Calem crept up to Ash's room. It was about 7 am, usually the time Serena and Ash would wake up.

"Malamar, come on out and use hypnosis." he said, releasing the

ghost-like pokemon.

Malamar aimed at the sleeping Ash and hit him with the yellow light. Ash stirred for a second and looked up at Calem. Then, he fell back against his pillow.

"Now, make him act like the biggest douche possible." Calem whispered. "I'll take care of his friends with a little bit of sleep powder."

As Serena woke up, she ran over to Ash's room, hoping to talk to him in private about what Calem had said. When she opened the door, she found Ash glaring at her.

"Who told you to come in?" he yelled, spitting all over her face.

>"What?" Serena said, taken aback.<p>

"You jerk!" Ash yelled, "You're the reason I've been struggling lately. You're the cause of my problems. Leave me alone!"

Serena stared at him in shock. Tears started to form around her eyes.

"A-Ash!" she said, "What's gotten into you?"

Ash sneered at her.

>"I finally realized," he said, "I don't want to see you ever again!"<p>

Serena began to wipe away her tears.

"Fine!" she said, mustering whatever strength possible. "Fine! Calem was right! I won't be seeing you again, Ash Ketchum!" she shouted back, before slamming the door. She ran to Calem's room and embraced him.

"You were right." she said, her eyes welling with tears. "Ash is just a good for nothing douche!"

Calem patted her slowly, while he smiled triumphantly.

"Let's go." he said, "The sooner, the better."

Serena left a note for Ash, as she walked out the door with Calem.

A/N: Couldn't think of another character to make into a douche so rip Calem :'(btw i actually really like the game and i have nothing against him.

10. Chapter 9: The Enemy of my Enemy

[Ash]

When Ash woke up, he felt terrible. Something had happened to his head, causing it to hurt. He checked his clock, and was surprised to see it was already 9 am. He knocked on Clemont's room, to check if he was awake. Ash opened the door, to see Clemont and Bonnie fast

asleep.

"What the-?" he thought. This was really weird. He went downstairs, to see if he could find Serena, but she was nowhere in sight.

"Serena?" Ash called, looking around. "_Weird,"_ he thought "_Must be still asleep."_

Ash walked back to his room, before his eyes fell on a sheet of paper carefully folded in front of his door. He grabbed it and began reading.

Dear Ash,

For the past months, my time with you was the greatest time of my life. But I guess people change, and I'm sorry to say that I don't think I can be friends with you anymore. I'm leaving with Calem, and I hope you don't feel too offended, but I doubt you will.

Best wishes,

Serena

Ash stared at the letter, feeling confused and angry. _"What the heck did I do?"_ he thought.

Ash angrily went back to his room, and checked on Pikachu. The mouse Pokemon was awake, frantically jumping up and down.

"What is it, buddy?" Ash asked.

"Pika! Pika!"

Ash shook his head.

"I don't understand." he said

"Pika pika!" the mouse yelled, running over to Clemont's room. Pikachu rummaged through Clemont's backpack, grabbing the Pokemon-human translator and handing it to Ash. Ash placed the device on his ear and listened.

"Calem used his Melamar to hypnotize you into being mean to Serena! He made you say mean things to her, which made her go away!" Pikachu said, "And he put sleep powder on Clemont and Bonnie! I saw it all!"

Ash dropped the device in shock.

"W-what?" he stammered, looking at Pikachu.

"Pika! Pika!" the mouse shouted, pointing at Clemont.

"Alright, you can wake him!"

"PIKA-CHU!" Pikachu yelled, sending his electricity at Clemont. The Lumiose gym leader woke with a shock and stared at Ash.

"Quick, there's not much time!" Ash said, "Calem took Serena and

left! We need to find them now!"

Clemont rubbed his eyes.

"W-what?" he said

"CALEM USED HYPNOSIS ON ME AND MADE ME SEND SERENA AWAY!" Ash shouted, waking Bonnie up too.

Clemont raised his eyebrows.

"How do you know?" he said

"Pikachu told me! Serena left this note too." Ash said, handing the piece of paper to Clemont. He took a quick look and then jumped out of bed as fast as possible.

"The future is now, thanks to science!" Clemont said, "Clemontic gear, on! I thought we would encounter a situation precisely like this one! I call it the super fast shoes! You'll be able to chase down Calem in no time!"

"Then what?" Ash asked, "What do I say to Serena?"

"Why not try your Team rocket line again? I thought it was pretty creative last time. Plus, you still have that uniform, right?" Clemont said

"Umâ€|I think soâ€|" Ash said, scratching his head.

"Now, time for your revenge." Clemont said, his glasses shining.

Ash strapped on the shoes and rushed out of the door. To his surprise, the shoes were moving by themselves.

"Pikachu, you ready?" Ash said, addressing the yellow mouse on his shoulder.

"Pika Pika!"

"Wow, science is so amazing!" Ash muttered, as he was whisked at about 100 mph towards the air. The world around him was a huge blur. Ash was getting dizzy. Then, the shoes began to slow down. It was a forest, filled with evergreen trees. The shoes hovered towards a sign in the distance, where there was a dirt path underneath. Ash saw two figures walking together, holding hands.

"Calem, you're gonna regret this!" Ash whispered, as the shoes gave chase. But suddenly, something grabbed him out of the air and yanked him towards another tree. Ash found himself staring at a Meowth. A man with purple hair was staring at him, followed by a woman with pink hair.

"Hello, twerp!" Meowth said, extending his claws.

"Seriously?" Ash yelled, "I have no time for this!"

"Huh?" Meowth asked, "What you up to?"

"Calem." Ash said, pointing at the figure in the distance. "He took

something from me."

"Really?" Jessie said, "Well he happened to take something from us too."

"What?" Ash said, "You guys get your stuff stolen too?"

"Shut it, twerp!" Meowth yelled, "The guy used his Malamar and jacked all our food! We gonna get him back now!"

"He took something from me too." Ash said, "Maybe we can work together this time?"

"You got it twerp!" Meowth said, "And that Team Rocket uniform looks great on ya, bub! You'd be great as one of us!"

"Yeah, whatever." Ash said, "I'm gonna scare the sh*t outta him and then you three do your thing."

"Pika Pika!" Pikachu said in agreement.

"Ya got it, bub!" Meowth yelled

"Hey," Ash said, "Any of you happen to have a mask or something?"

Meowth pulled a Pikachu mask out of his bag.

"We were originally gonna capture your Pikachu with this!" he said, "But here. The enemy of my enemy is my friend! This mask is good against all attacks, except that twerp's hypnosis!"

Ash put it on and powered up his boots again.

"Alright, it's time!" he yelled.

Serena and Calem were walking towards the rock gym just like Calem had said, when something strange happened. A person in a Pikachu mask and a Team Rocket uniform appeared from out of the air. On his shoulder was a Pikachu.

"I might not have much cash," he said, "And I can be really rash."

The masked man landed on the ground.

"But I'm good at taking out the trash," he yelled, pointing at Calem, "And that's why I'm Ash!"

Serena's heart skipped a beat. She fell over and stared in shock.

"Prepare for trouble!" Ash yelled, "And I'll give you double!"

Ash went on, laughing at the mortified expression on Calem's face.

"To protect my love, from devastation!" he said, looking at Serena through his Pikachu mask. Ash went on.

"To unite all people within my nation!"

"To denounce the evils that you consist of!" Ash said, pointing at Calem

"To kick your ass to the stars above!"

"Ash!"

"Pika Pika!" the yellow mouse added

"You'll be gone as fast as light! Surrender now, or you're in for your last fight!" Ash finished.

Serena laughed, forgetting everything that happened. Ash ripped off his mask and walked towards Serena.

>"Serena," Ash said, looking towards her. "Calem used hypnosis on me earlier and got me to say these terrible things to you. I wouldn't ever hurt you like that. Forgive me."<p>

Serena looked from Ash to Calem.

"Is that true?" Serena asked, turning towards Calem

"It sure is!" someone said from behind. Ash saw Clemont and Bonnie running over.

"He used sleep powder on us too!" Clemont said angrily, "And I have it on video right here!"

Clemont pulled a camera out of his pocket. It showed Calem's butterfree sprinkling Clemont and Bonnie with sleep powder.

"Always check to make sure security is down!" Clemont said

Serena looked at Calem.

"I don't believe it." she said, glaring at him angrily

Calem shook in anger.

"Alright, you leave me with no choice!" he yelled, "Melamar, come on out and use hypnosis on them all!"

Melamar began to glow with yellow light. It directed it towards Ash.

"Not today, bub! Wobbuffet, do your thing!" someone shouted

The real Team Rocket appeared. Wobbuffet absorbed the hypnosis and reflected it towards Melamar, who was barely able to dodge.

"Now, taste my fury swipes!" Meowth said, scratching Melamar.

"Inkay, use psybeam!" James yelled

"You too, Gourgeist, use shadow ball!" Jessie added.

Ash watched as Calem was overwhelmed by Team Rocket. He indicated

towards Bonnie, Clemont, and Serena.

"Let's go, guys." he said

"Wait," Clemont said, "What about Calem? We can't leave him with Team Rocket!"

"Oh well," Bonnie said, "he deserves it."

The four of them walked back towards the Pokemon center, listening to Calem and Team Rocket brawl. Bonnie and Clemont took the lead, while Serena stayed back with Ash.

"I knew something was wrong," she said, "I never doubted you for a second."

"Thanks," Ash said

"But Ash," Serena asked, "Did you really call me your love?"

Ash felt himself turning red. "I think I'm not fully recovered from the hypnosis yet." he said, "Sorry for the weird things I might've said, but to be honest, I don't remember saying anything!" he added hastily.

Serena shook her head.

"After all that, and you still can't admit it." she mumbled to herself, "Oh Ash, when will you accept the fact that you like me."

They walked back with Serena and Bonnie teasing Ash about his rhymes.

"Really, Ash?" Bonnie was saying. "'Kick your ass to the stars above!'"

All of them laughed, except Ash, who buried his face in his hat.

[Bedtime Story Part 2]

Back at the Pokemon Center, Bonnie was about to go to sleep.

"Clemont, finish that story please!" she said

"Wait," Ash said, "Let me tell her a bedtime story."

"All yours!" Clemont said, sighing in relief.

"So once upon a time," Ash began "There was a boy. And he really really liked someone. A girl who's eyes were as blue as the sea. Whose hair flowed in the most gorgeous way possible. But he couldn't tell her. Something was holding him back. They were already the bestest friends. They had helped each other out many times, fighting off crooks, winning Pokemon battles, and enjoying each other's company. One day, a bad person came along and tried to ruin this relationship, but the boy and his friends beat the bad person up. Andâ€|"

"Oh grow up, Ash!" Bonnie said, "Just tell her already! Besides, your story telling skills suck! My big brother is way better!"

"Dedenne!" the mouse yelled from inside her bag

A/N: Soooâ€|not sure if i should continue with Clemont's bedtime stories, which if you don't know, is a parody of the trojan war. And yea once again sorry about Calem, for those who really enjoy the game, but I had to make someone the bad guy. Rip /3 but still hope you enjoyed. This chapter was really fun to write :)

11. Chapter 10: Confession and Escape

That night, after wrapping up his storytelling fiasco, Ash took a few deep breaths. He had to tell her. He had to. Ash ran as fast as he could to Serena's room, thinking of nothing but her. He pushed the door open and saw Serena, lying in her bed, with a peaceful expression on her face.

Ash walked over and grabbed her hand and whispered,

"Can you hear me?"

"Yes," she replied.

"From the day you came back into my life," Ash began, "There hasn't been a single day, which I haven't thought of you. It's like you've become a part of me."

Serena blushed slightly, but also frowned. _"Jeez, how long did it take you to come up with that?" _she thought.

Ash went on.

"Every day," he began, "Every day I would see you, and I would feel this connection, something I can't explain. It's not something I can explain. But there is something I am sure of. I-I really really like you. When Team Rocket took you, I felt like my world was ending around me. I felt like a part of me was missing. And when you left with Calem, I can't tell you how much pain I felt. I'm sorry I couldn't tell you earlier. I was afraid that-

"I would reject you and leave you forever." Serena said, "I've heard."

"H-how?" Ash whispered

"Many times," she said back, winking. "I knew all along how you felt since you rescued me from Team Rocket that one day."

"You rescued me!" Ash said indignantly. "I was the prat who was knocked out and you were the hero that beat them up!"

"No." Serena said. "I was the prat that let you get beat up. And I can't tell you how thankful I am to have you. If it weren't for you, I'd be somewhere with that jerk Calem probably. And I would've never discovered how amazing Pokemon performances are. Ash, don't worry. I love you too."

Serena grabbed Ash's neck and softly pressed her lips against his. Ash could clearly see into her deep blue eyes.

"Serena," he said slowly, "Serena, there's one more thing."

"What is it?" Serena said back

"Even though Calem seemed like a jerk, he really just wanted the best for you." Ash said, "His methods might have been a little extreme, but he was right. I have been limiting you."

"W-what do you m-mean?" Serena said, her bottom lip quivering.

"After we left that day, Calem defeated Team Rocket by himself and sent me a letter. He explained why he did what he did. He wanted to help you. He said that as long as I was in your life, you would be stuck. You wouldn't be able to live your life. You would follow me everywhere, and your own talents would be suppressed. And he was right."

"Ash, you know that's not true!" Serena said

"It is true. Because of me, you're wasting time you could be using to improve your performances!"

"Ash what are you saying?" Serena said, her eyes filling with tears.

"I'm saying," Ash said, choking back tears. "Go! Leave me alone! Don't let me stop you!"

"Ash! Please!" Serena said, "Don't do this!"

"I can't stand to watch you follow me like this! I want you to be free!" Ash yelled

Serena begged and begged, but nothing seemed to work. Finally, she took a deep breath and asked, "Will I ever see you again?"

"Five years from now." Ash said, "Five years, on Christmas Eve, we'll meet at the top of Lumiose tower."

"Okay Ash." Serena said, "I'll be Kalos Queen by then!"

"And I'll finally win a League!" he said back, grinning.

They embraced for the last time. Serena watched as Bonnie, Clemont, and her beloved Ash headed out of the Pokemon center, leaving her to cry softly by herself.

"Palermo, I'm coming." Serena said, "And I'll dethrone Aria for you, Ash Ketchum!"

Serena stared at the distant three figures.

"Oh Ash," she said, "Best of luck."

Ash was right. She needed to go on her own journey. Serena packed her

bags and headed out, back to where Palermo said she would be.

12. Check out the Sequel!

It doesn't end here! Check out my sequel, Sinnoh-bound!

End
file.